

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 H-01
SS-15 NSC-05 PRS-01 PA-01 USIA-06 /060 R

DRAFTED BY EB/AN:ARIMAS:BA
APPROVED BY EB/TCA:JWBILLER
EB/AN:RABROWN
ARA/ECP:DTAHER
CAB:DLITTON (INFO)
DOC/USTS:FCHAVEZ (INFO)
ARA/MEX:EBITTNER (SUBS)
-----045838 101002Z /10
P 092133Z SEP 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 216549

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, MX

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: US-MEXICO CIVIL AVIATION NEGOTIATIONS

1. DEPT WISHES TO TAKE EVERY APPROPRIATE STEP TO ENCOURAGE FAVORABLE OUTCOME OF NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ARE TO START ON SEPT 19. IN PREVIOUS SESSIONS, MEXICAN AIRLINE INTERESTS, AS REPRESENTED BY THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION, WERE SUCCESSFUL IN OVERRIDING MEXICAN TOURISM INTERESTS BY PREVAILING ON PRINCIPAL GOM DECISION MAKERS TO ADOPT PROTECTIONIST NEGOTIATING POLICIES. SUCH POLICIES HAVE RESULTED IN REPEATED FAILURE TO NEGOTIATE EXPANDED AIRLINE ROUTE PATTERNS WHICH COULD BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF THE TRAVELING PUBLIC. IF WE ARE TO AVOID ANOTHER STALEMATE, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOM BE PER-
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SUADED OF THE MUTUAL BENEFITS OF A NEW AGREEMENT THAT WOULD EXPAND US ROUTES TO MEXICO AND BEYOND. THIS ISSUE WAS HIGHLIGHTED DURING THE VISIT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR TOURISM, FABIAN CHAVEZ, JR., WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO ON JULY 21 IN CONNECTION WITH THE MEETING OF THE US-MEXICO TOURISM SUBGROUP OF THE BILATERAL CONSUL-TATIVE MECHANISM ESTABLISHED BY PRESIDENTS CARTER AND

LOPEZ-PORTILLO.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT A NEW AGREEMENT WITH EXPANDED ROUTES WOULD BE OF MUTUAL BENEFIT TO BOTH MEXICO AND US. WE ATTACH PRIORITY IMPORTANCE TO PERMITTING GROWTH OF INTERNATIONAL AVIATION NETWORK SO THAT TRAVELLERS AND SHIPPERS ARE SERVED WITH MAXIMUM CONVENIENCE AND MINIMUM COST. WE ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT THAT RESULT OF THIS EXPANSION MAY BE NET BALANCE OF PAYMENTS OUTFLOW FOR US BECAUSE MOST TRAVELLERS, PARTICULARLY BETWEEN US AND MEXICO, ARE US CITIZENS GOING ABROAD RATHER THAN FOREIGNERS COMING TO US. WE ASSUME THAT GOM PRIORITIES ARE DIFFERENT. GOM UNDOUBTEDLY HAS INTEREST IN MAINTENANCE AND GROWTH OF MEXICAN AIRLINES, AND THIS WILL BE POSSIBLE UNDER TYPE OF AGREEMENT WE PROPOSE. WE INTEND TO BE RESPONSIVE IN MAKING APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS IN THE MEXICAN ROUTE SCHEDULE SO THAT MEXICAN AIRLINES CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE BENEFITS OF A GROWING TRAVEL MARKET. WE WOULD EXPECT, HOWEVER, THAT GOM'S PARAMOUNT INTEREST RELATES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS. ROUTE EXPANSION THAT WE ENVISAGE, REGARDLESS OF WHOSE CARRIERS DERIVE GREATER BENEFIT, WOULD HAVE MAJOR BENEFICIAL EFFECTS ON THE MEXICAN BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY INCREASING FOREIGN TOURIST SPENDING IN MEXICO. WE HOPE THAT GOM NEGOTIATORS WILL BE GUIDED BY THIS BROAD MEXICAN INTEREST RATHER THAN THE MUCH NARROWER ONE OF PROTECTING MEXICAN AIRLINES.

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3. WE HAVE A NUMBER OF INDICATIONS THAT FOREGOING CONSIDERATIONS ARE UNDERSTOOD AND SUPPORTED AT POLICY LEVEL OF GOM. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT AT LEVEL OF OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTUAL CONDUCT OF NEGOTIATIONS, HOWEVER, NARROWER AVIATION VIEWS MAY PREVAIL. EMBASSY SHOULD APPROACH GOM AT HIGHEST USEFUL LEVEL, POSSIBLY INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT, TO STATE THAT USG ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO NEGOTIATIONS BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 19. DRAWING ON PARA 2 ABOVE, EMBASSY SHOULD SAY THAT OUR NEGOTIATORS HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO BE FORTHCOMING AND CONSTRUCTIVE IN WORKING TOWARD A GROWTH-ORIENTED AGREEMENT THAT WILL BENEFIT BOTH MEXICO AND US, AND WE HOPE THAT MEXICAN NEGOTIATORS HAVE SIMILAR INSTRUCTIONS.

4. PLEASE REPORT OUTCOME OF THESE APPROACHES. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE216549
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARIMAS:BA
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770328-0810
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770979/aaaacowr.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e0030e49-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1323997
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: US-MEXICO CIVIL AVIATION NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: EAIR, MX, US
To: MEXICO
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e0030e49-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009